

RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

The Examiner has required restriction under 35 U.S.C. § 121 and 372 to one of the following inventions:

- I. Claims 1 and 5-18, allegedly drawn to a method for protecting a thiol group in a protein.
- II. Claim 2, allegedly drawn to a method for inhibiting polymerization.
- III. Claim 3, allegedly drawn to a method for inhibiting modification of a protein.
- IV. Claim 4, allegedly drawn to a method for inhibiting an exchange reaction of a thiol group.
- V. Claims 19-21, allegedly drawn to a protein.

ELECTION

In order to be responsive to the requirement for restriction, Applicants elect, with traverse, the invention set forth in **Group I, claims 1 and 5 – 18**, drawn to a method for protecting a thiol group in a protein.

TRAVERSE

Notwithstanding the election of the claims of Group I, in order to be responsive to the requirement for restriction, Applicants respectfully traverse the requirement.

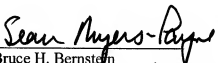
Applicants note that this application is a national stage application under 35 USC § 371, and thus under unity of invention practice, the Examiner must establish that the claims lack unity of invention under PCT Rule 13.1 and 37 C.F.R. § 1.475. Applicants note that the Restriction Requirement indicates that the technical feature linking Groups I – V “is protecting a thiol group

in a protein.” The Office asserts that Thompson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,130,418) teaches “a method for protecting a thiol group by adding disulfides” and concludes that in view of the teaching of Thompson et al. the special technical feature linking the Groups does not define a contribution over the art.

The Restriction Requirement further contends that “there would be a serious search and examination burden if restriction were not required,” because of the distinctness and independence of the inventions. Applicants respectfully submit that the Restriction Requirement is improper for this reason, since Unity of Invention rules do not contemplate burden on the Patent Office as a basis for restricting claims. To the extent that the Restriction is founded on that basis, it is improper.

If there are any comments or questions, the undersigned may be contacted at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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